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FROM: Ambassador LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL

Charge: STATE

10-570

20 Oct 63
1 p.m.

ACTION: SecState Washington PRIORITY

For the Secretary from Bruce.

The official announcement from Buckingham Palace at noon yesterday that "The Queen this morning received in audience the Lord of Stone who kissed hands on his appointment as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury" put a definite end to any lingering speculation about the Macmillan successorship.

It has, however, left Conservative politicians in a state (by Labor and Liberal opponents alleged to have long been chronic), of bewilderment. The moves by which the hopes of Butler, and other aspirants, were frustrated, are almost universally thought to have been prescribed by the Old Master from his hospital bed. It is still unknown, and perhaps always will be, how Macmillan induced Home to accept a position for which he had previously expressed distaste. Thirteen months ago, when questioned "Would you like to be Prime Minister?" he answered "No". He responded to the further question: "You are very definite, why not?" by replying: "Well, after I had dipped fairly freely into my first bottle of port, my father said to me: 'You know, the most important thing in life is to know when to stop!'"

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Authority NND 968030 By NARS, Date 12-18-96

OUTGOING

most friends and opponents alike thought, up to the moment of truth, that Home would refuse an office to which he seemed temperamentally disinclined. One of the reasons he was so widely admired was for his aloofness from disputation except on matters of principle, his reputation for disinterest in political ambition, his strong attachment to the preservation of his own liberty of action, which as Foreign Secretary he could maintain in much greater degree than as Prime Minister, and, also his pleasure in the congenial atmosphere of the House of Lords.

Whether the impression he generated, since his schooldays, of preferring to remain detached from rude competition, other than athletic, was genuine, has now been brought into question by his adversaries.

Two sections of the population are immoderately pleased by his selection namely the Scots and the Labor Party. As a fellow Scot, even Jo Grimond, though deprecating the choice, has referred to his liking for the Prime Minister.

Scots have almost immemorially greatly influenced the affairs of the United Kingdom out of all proportion to their numerical strength. While others have struggled to export goods to redress an adverse balance of payments

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED Authority State letter

OUTGOING

CONFIDENTIAL

Classification Control 10-570

 Date 10-20-63

of payments, the astute Hibernians have exported men to occupy strong points in other countries. Macmillan was one of them, despite being only a half Scot. Now they will have a genuine kilt wearer, in command of the political destinies of the United Kingdom, and are appropriately proud of it.

On the other hand, the Labor Party is also pleased. Harold Wilson has already rejected the idea of a delay in reopening Parliament to await the shift of Home from ermine to sackcloth.

It is quite possible that the British who still dearly love a Lord, including one who is credited as having hearkened to the call of public duty in renouncing his peculiar privileges, may confound the prognostic of Wilson et al, who regard these happenings as almost too good to be true.

The aristocratic theory in British Government may be more deeply rooted than is commonly reported. Men like Home are not ill-viewed by many voters, who wish their public figures to be representatives of the national interest, rather than punch cards, registering selfish pressures.

As to Home himself, the man is admirable. He is decent, tolerant religious, sympathetic, intelligent, witty, charming, courteous, imaginative and

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CONFIDENTIAL

Charge: Classification Control: 10-570

 Date: 10-20-63

and very tough. His immediate family, to which he is devoted, has quality. His wife is a daughter of the deceased Dr. Cyril Alington, once Dean of Durham, after having been the famous Headmaster of Eton. It would be difficult to find any fault in her--indeed no one has made such a vain effort.

Home himself was, as an Etonian, one of its prized products. Not a prime scholar, he was a ~~mxkkm~~ success with his fellow students. He was President of Pop, Keeper of the Field, and Captain of the Eleven. In a country where cricket counts, he started well. It is still gratifying to the public to see their Foreign Secretary absent himself from Whitehall, and repair, in a gray top hat, carelessly tilted, to watch, with passion, the intricacies of the supreme cricket matches at Lords. He is almost equally carefree at race meetings; no bettor himself, he is a student of form, and chatty about odds.

There is steel in the man, and why not, if one considers his personal and family history. For ~~hm~~ more than four hundred years, the family of this Scottish laird has exercised power. In that period of Scottish history when obligations of loyalty, kindness, fairness, were /chiefly

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OFFGOING

CONFIDENTIAL
Classification

Charge: Control 10-570

 Date 10-20-63

chiefly honored in the breach, the Douglases were border ruffians, but, at the same time, important in a social and political sense. Their durability, despite assassination and battles, as well as impairment of longevity by being hanged, drawn and quartered for offenses against more powerful rivals, domestic and English, was, even for Scotland, of a high standard. When customs changed, the Homes and Douglases, like their peers, adapted themselves to a different mode of life.

Even so, there is a strain of eccentricity in the family; it might better be called a tendency to independent conduct. One of Lord Home's brothers, the playwright William, was court-martialled and jailed for refusing as an Army officer to fire on the innocent inhabitants of a French village, which he rightly suspected harbored no Germans.

Home is a disciplined man. Honorably discharged from the Army, during the last War, he spent two years in bed, a victim of spinal tuberculosis.

There is considerable irony and human tragedy in this affair. Lord R Salisbury, to whom both Eden and Macmillan owed so much--in the latter case probably his designation as Prime Minister--was said by both

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OUTGOING

by both of them to be ineligible for appointment as Foreign Secretary, for which, by common consent, he was then the best qualified man in the United Kingdom, because he was a member of the House of Lords. A few years later, this objection, in the opinion of Macmillan, was no longer pertinent, and Home, whom Salisbury admired, and for whom he has a real affection, was given the post. Of course, there were other reasons than that cited. One of the loftiest contemporaneous quarrels in England is that between certain elements of the Salisbury and Devonshire families, which are closely connected by frequent intermarriages.

The case of Butler is tragic. This leadhorse, or wheelhorse, of the Conservative Party has been discarded under circumstances that to many stink of foul play on the part of Macmillan. There are those who share his wife's lament: "He deserved to be Prime Minister..... and would have been one of the greatest." As Foreign Secretary, which he will be named today, he should be excellent. Throughout the last two weeks, he has behaved gallantly.

Now we come to the nub of this curious proceeding. Harold Macmillan has not quitted political life, and is recovering rapidly from the effects of

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Authority NND 969078 By NARS, Date 12-18-06

his serious operation. With what his enemies call Machiavellian cunning and treachery, as opposed to the contention of his followers that he has sought only to protect the true interests of the realm, he has, through his choice of Home, lengthened the shadow he was accustomed to cast over British politics.

His secretive nature, termed by detractors as hiding nothing more than cynical opportunism, has, it is said, successfully concealed the reasons why he fastened, with determined efficacy, on the destruction for the second time of the ambitions of his faithful coadjutor, Rab Butler. Did he really believe that Home is better equipped than Butler to lead the Conservatives to an electoral victory? We shall probably never know the explanation.

During this entire episode, Home has seemed the most carefree of the individuals immediately involved. I had dinner with him two nights ago, in a company of ten, during which, while his fate was immediately in balance, one could not discern a trace of concern over his prospects.

Meanwhile, there will be fascinating developments in British domestic politics. To attempt to predict their outcome would be futile.

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DECLASSIFIED Authority State Dept. Letter 3/22/78

OUTGOING

CONFIDENTIAL
Classification

Charge: Control: 10-570

- 8 - Date: 10-20-63

I sincerely hope we will not attempt to plumb the unfathomable, but rely on the fact that the Home Government will be one, within the limitations of a justifiable exercise of respective national pride and prejudice, with which there is no reason to doubt that we can entertain a completely satisfactory relationship.

GP-3

BRUCE

AMB:DBruce/so - October 20, 1963

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

I saw Carmen Esnault Pelterie for the first time this evening, though she ha been staying here for days with her son Michel. They had been down at Oxford, to see Michel receive a degree. On the way back, he forgot the rule of the road in England, and collided head on with an unhappy motorist. Miraculously no one was injured, but both cars were wrecked. They dined with us, as did Kisty Hesketh, who returned Nicky after he spent several days with her sons, and Sheila Dimitri and Dimitri. Poor Sheila has lost the sight of one eye, as the result of some obscure affliction. We had a lot of laughs, as was inevitable when the greatest generator of them of all time, Carmen, is present.

October 21, 1963 - Monday

I went to the shooting range this morning, and for the first time in my life tackled clay pigeons thrown from a 40-yard high trap. I could hardly see the little black circles, but did hit a few of them. The loader said that there had been a standing offer at the shooting school for many years of ten pounds to any one who could break 20 consecutive targets at this height. It has never been won. The number of cartridges fired at this establishment during a twelve months is about 750,000.

At the office, I met a group of new Economic Officers, who are now under the mild and efficient suasion of Tom Beale.

I lunched with Eldon Griffiths at the Oxford and Cambridge Club. He has resigned from Newsweek, and is working at the central office of the Conservative Party. I told him I would not mention the details of what he is doing, but he is operating on the highest level. I hope he will in time become an M. P.

I had an appointment with Francis McIntyre this afternoon, but intercepted him on the steps to tell him I had suddenly been called to the Foreign Office to

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from Paris, and wants me to effect an introduction to Chip Bohlen, which I will do in Bonn this week.

I gave a reception for the American press tonight at the Chancery, with a long question and answer period. They were:

William Sheehan, ABC
Thomas H. Ochiltree, Associated Press
David M. Culhane, Baltimore Sun
William Stoneman, Chicago Daily News
Arthur Veysey, Chicago Tribune
John Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor
Alexander Kendrick, CBS
John Shinn, McGraw-Hill World News
Graham Hovey, Minneapolis Star and Tribune
Norman Gelb, Mutual Broadcasting System
Joseph C. Harsch, NBC
Sheward Hagerty, Newsweek
Tom Lambert, New York Herald Tribune
James M. Feron, New York Times
Roderick MacLeish, Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.
Robert Elson, TIME
Paul R. Allerup, United Press International

I received this afternoon the following letter from Alec Home:

Tonight, Henry Hyde and Kisty Hesketh came to dinner. The latter had sent in four partridges from the country, which was a treat. Henry was in his best conversational strain.

October 22, 1963 - Tuesday

Robert Goldberg, son of Arthur Goldberg, Justice of the Supreme Court, came to see me this morning. He is spending this academic year on a graduate fellowship at the London School of Economics, studying the British Labour Party and the Common Market. He has also been commissioned to write a series of articles for the Knight newspapers on current political developments in Great Britain. I found him modest and intelligent.

E and I went to the American Embassy Wives Association lunch at the Columbia Club, where I was the guest of honor. I delivered something of a speech,